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Title: Need for opening more numbers of Ekalabya Model Residential Schools and enhance the scholarship amount and other recurring expenditure for these schools in Orissa.

SHRI B. MAHTAB (CUTTACK): Sir, the human development indicators of the Scheduled Tribe population are much lower than the rest of the population in Orissa. The literacy rate of STs in Orissa as per 2001 census is 37.37 per cent in comparison to the total literacy rate of 63.08 per cent. The drop out rate of tribal children is alarming. Despite various measures taken by the State Government to check dropouts - including free meals, providing free books, scholarship and free dress to girl students - dropout rates are still areas of serious concern.

So far, the Government of India has sanctioned 10 numbers of Ekalabya Model Residential Schools for Orissa and all are functioning well. I would urge upon the Government to sanction 18 numbers of Ekalabya Model Residential Schools, at least one in each Block situated in Scheduled areas. This may be done in a phased manner within a span of five years.

The money that is being released towards expenditure is quite inadequate in comparison to the Navodaya Vidyalayas. There is no provision to construct boundary walls, playground, cultural hall, etc. Funds be provided for such purposes also. It is also found that the scholarship to students who study in Ekalabya Model Residential Schools is much less than that the students are getting in Navodaya Vidyalayas. Even the Ministry of Tribal Affairs is sanctioning grants to NGOs who are running residential schools get much more.

I urge upon the Government to raise the scholarship and other recurring expenditure in tune with that of Navodaya Vidyalayas at the earliest.